

Eastern MRS Meeting
Wilson Co DSS
January 11, 2005

Attendees:

State Staff: Tony Troop, Gale Trevathyan, Gwen Byrns, Susan Moss, Jeff Olson, Heather Thomas, Sue Dickenson, Veronica McPhatter, Velvet Nixon
Tea Henderson (NCSU Family Group Conferencing), Linda Frankel (Duke)

Counties: Bladen, Brunswick, Durham, Franklin, Halifax, Harnett, Johnston, Martin, Nash, New Hanover, Pasquotank, Warren, Wilson.

Agenda:

Introduction

Division Updates (Dear County & Admin Letters)

MRS Issues: evaluation, training, legislation, consultation

Policy Questions or Issues

Breakouts by Implementation more than 6 months/ not yet or less than 6 months

Division Updates – Letters/ Policy Updates

- The following administrative or Dear County Director letters have come out:
 - Child Welfare Funding Survey
 - Administrative Letter WF 06-04 (12/15) Social Security Increase
 - DCD (12/20) Challenge for Children 2005
 - WF Manual Change notice CN12-2004 DSS 82-18
 - DCD Ch 5 Immediate Change to 1205 Foster Care payments 12-2004
 - Change to Children s Services Sec 9 Drug Affected Children (primarily meth) Protocol went out with this notice
 - Practice Guidelines for Family Centered Practice are out this was in draft form for a long time, has now been finalized. Also on MRS website.
 - Important to note that this is not new manual material and does not establish new policy. It quotes and refers to policy but it is not policy, only practice guidelines.

Direction for MRS - 4 components: Evaluation, Training, Legislation, Consultation

- Evaluation
 - Web-based evaluation rolling out very soon.
 - Will be conducting trainings in February and March. Trainings will be train the trainer format so should carefully consider who will attend. Trainings will be in Raleigh unless a county can find a training site.
 - The 42 no longer have to submit the Tracking Form, however the 10 need to continue the spreadsheet until further notice to ensure that we have data for the remainder of this year.

- Duke will be conducting in-depth evaluation including client interviews and record reviews as well as information on MRS as a whole.
- There will be intensive focus on 4 MRS counties, Alamance, Caldwell, Franklin, and Nash because they could be matched with 4 comparison counties.
- Site visits to these counties will occur late March to mid-April.
- Tony will send out a spreadsheet with data from the Data Warehouse.
- Training
 - Calendar is out, 52 need to get their training needs for existing staff met prior to 7/1/05.
 - Will start offering Cornerstone I to non MRS counties March 1
 - DV training one trainer, Angela Holloway has been hired, and other is in the hiring process. Will start training after that process complete.
 - Meth trainings contract almost complete.
 - Keep on the lookout for further information on DV and meth trainings.
- Legislative
 - Division is asking the General Assembly to look at all of 7B (Child Welfare) for changes in language to reflect MRS.
 - What this does is opens all Child Welfare Law to review and debate by legislature.
 - When General Assembly asks the Division for information, we may look to counties.
- Consultation
 - Primary consultation with CPRs and Work First Reps.
 - Division will post a MRS policy consultant soon. This person will take over some of the duties Tony had before taking the Coordinator position.

Policy Questions and Issues

- How can we hear each others success stories?
 - Proposal is to have something on the web where counties can share stories about specific families or things that are working for them. We will try this and see how it goes.

Breakouts

- Group with 6 months+ of experience in assigning Family Assessments was asked to briefly address their strengths and successes related to:
 1. Family Assessments
 2. Collaboration with Law Enforcement
 3. CFT Meetings
 4. Work First Collaboration
 5. Shared Parenting

6. County Needs to help achieve child safety, permanence, and well-being.

- New Hanover
 - Started Family Assessment 2/04 in 1 of 4 teams, have met with all Law Enforcement except Wilmington PD because they have had an interim chief. There is no a new chief and they will be meeting with him soon. Contract with an outside mediator for CFT and they are great. By doing it this way the family does not get mad at DSS. Have a situation where Work 1st workers do the Family Assessments if they are already working with that family. Also provide services if found In Need of Services. Do not do Forensic Assessments. Question was asked if they can tell a difference in results for families who had CPS SW vs. Work 1st SW. They cannot tell any differences. This required a lot of training and Work 1st not happy with it at first, but now are more accepting, some have embraced it. Also work with a professor at UNC-W who has trained the whole agency on Family Centered Practice. Working on Shared Parenting, sometimes hard to do when you are taking children.
 - Needs always more workers.
 - Discussion: Not sure that in home services are really any different than before just a new name? Bladen said they have a more individual case plan, can see the Intensive families more because you don't need to see the Moderate ones as much and you don't have the requirements of seeing all substantiated families certain amounts.
 - Discussion: Facilitators at CFT for Moderate cases? Nash said their rule of thumb is to consider who will be there and the dynamics of that group.
- Bladen
 - Started 8/02, try to do as many FA as possible. Always had a good relationship with Law Enforcement because they are a small county. They have a new ADA who is involved in CW issues and interested in pursuing cases. Working with her to find out what they need to have for her to prosecute. Use staff and CFT facilitators. Cross check clients with Work 1st who are one half over so talk frequently. Working on Shared Parenting, have good and bad stories. SP is incorporated in MAPP training, but stress that it is situational, not in every case, will not put Foster Parents at risk.
- Brunswick
 - Began in 4/04, comfortable with it. Families coming up with their own service plans since there is more talking. All neglect are taken as Family Assessment except the special circumstances and DV. Good relationship with Sheriff's Department, had their first meth lab, collaboration was so good that the newspaper reported the lab was raided jointly by Sheriff and DSS! Struggling with CFT, they do not have any outside facilitators. Collaboration with Work 1st is ok,

but so far there have been few cases of overlap. Shared Parenting is great in theory and has been in MAPP, in practice is struggling. Tends to work better if both parents can make it to the week 1 meeting.

- Harnett
 - Family Assessment since 7/04, now doing about 60% of those cases that could be FA are. No DV. Law Enforcement collaboration started great, but now there is a vacancy at the ADA's office so they are less involved, concerned about the progress of prosecution. Have 2 assessors trained as facilitators, it's ok but could be better, they trade off so that they never facilitate their own case. Cross check caseloads with Work 1st. First Shared Parenting meeting went great; most Foster Parents are buying into it.
- Franklin
 - Original 10. Good relationship with Sheriff, but the ADA is not as responsive to prosecuting child abuse cases as they'd like. Don't have a facilitator; Patrick does them all unless the social worker does them, which happens sometimes if it's appropriate. Cross check caseloads with Work 1st and they are mandatory collateral. Work together on case plans and make home visits together.
 - Need feel that their main need is Mental Health services. (This was seconded by almost everyone in the room.)
- Wilson
 - Started 100% 7/04. Still looking at what they did and how they did it. Had an investigative and a treatment team, those are now combined. Staff likes frontloading services and group staffing. Had a meeting with Law Enforcement and only ADA, Sheriff, and 1 town showed up. Prosecutions take 1-2 years. Two full time facilitators who set up the meetings, the case plans come from those meetings. Work 1st a mandatory collateral. Beginning discussions with Family Net. Shared Parenting seems to be going well and Foster Parents like it.
 - Discussion are other people incorporating CFTs after removal with PPAP? Nash and Franklin do both.
- Nash
 - Family Assessment since 10/02. Good relationship with Sheriff's Department, new police chief in Rocky Mount, juvenile chief retiring so will have to work with new chief. Originally has all SW trained to facilitate CFT and they rotated. SW didn't like it and it didn't work well so they have now hired a 20 hour a week facilitator and the quality of CFT has gone way up.
- General Discussion questions came up about transferring custody directly from biological parent to someone else without going DSS taking custody first. What is the state policy on this?

Mini-success stories

Bladen

Shared Parenting: Had a teenage mother that was able to attend all her infants Doctor s appointments with the Foster Parent. Have had biological and Foster Parents that stay in touch after placement ends and children return home. Biological parent thanked social services in court for helping her get her life straightened out.

General: Judge has applauded DSS staff in court; the cases are not lasting as long. Recidivism is reduced and the chronic malicious reports with certain families are greatly reduced.

Harnett

CFT Meetings Sure that at least one of these kept children from coming into care.

Nash

CFT Meetings have had 3 meetings where the family decided it was in the nest interest of the child to be placed. Mental Health and School system were at these meetings and they said they have changed their view of DSS.